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Book's tips improve WordPerfect

"The Best Book of: WordPerfect" is, as its name says, one of the best.

The soft-cover publication, written by Vincent Alfieri and offered for \$19.95 by Hayden Books of Indianapolis, provides many examples and useful hints that go beyond the manual and the 20 or so books on the shelves about this dramatically successful word-processing program.

For beginners, the manual that comes with the program is quite sufficient. But if you've been using WordPerfect for a while then you'll need the hints and tips that "The Best Book" can provide.

With the program, I discovered shortcuts that somehow eluded me over the years, despite constant use of WordPerfect.

Here are some of my favorite finds:

✓ The hard space. Word pro-

cessing programs have the annoying tendency to split dates and names at the end of line, and I never really knew how to prevent it until this book explained WordPerfect's answer to the problem. By using a "hard space," entered by touching the "Home" and space bar simultaneously, a space is entered in the text — like the space in the date Dec. 21 — but won't end up at the end of a line.

✓ Automatic hyphenation. For years, I thought that WordPerfect was not able to make hyphenation decisions, but now I've learned that the program has an automatic

hyphenation feature that will split words according to certain basic rules. It's not as good as a hyphenation dictionary, which I suspect we'll see as a standard feature of word processing programs in the future, but it's definitely a time-saver. And one I'll use, now that I

know about it.

✓ Spelling tutor. This book even provides hints on how to guess at the spelling of a word by using WordPerfect's spell-checking feature. First you spell the word phonetically and then let the program give you a list of possible correctly spelled words to choose from.

✓ Strike-out and red-lining features. For people who pass around draft documents to others for review, these features are very handy. Strike-out puts dashes over existing text, and red-lining puts vertical lines in the left margin of newly added paragraphs. It's easy to add using the block command and easy to delete with a single delete key. The book gives a better explanation of how it's done than the manual.

✓ Macro suggestions. Just mention the word "programming" to most casual PC users, and you'll see them visibly pale. But with the simple step-by-step explanation of this time-saving technique, "The Best Book" gently shows you how to combine several commands into

a single keystroke. With just a little practice, you'll be easily and quickly customizing the program to fit your own needs. The book provides several macros that can be copied for immediate use.

Admittedly, many of these features are covered in the WordPerfect documentation. However, even as a longtime user, I found myself somewhat intimidated by the manner in which they are explained. "The Best Book," in contrast, provides the information in a simple, easy-to-digest form.

The bottom line: I can't recommend rushing out and buying this book for beginners, but if you've used the program for a while and want to become even more proficient, then I highly recommend it. It's the best book of its type I've seen.

Hillel Segal is an independent computer consultant and author of the monthly Executive Computing Newsletter, published by the Association of Computer Users, P.O. Box 9003, Boulder 80301.



Segal